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Post Office Box 1020
3330 Main Avenue
Northport, Alabama 35476
205-333-1007
Fax 205-339-8771
May 20, 1998

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Secretary
Room 222
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: RM-9260

Enclosed herewith are the original and nine copies of the "Comments or TTI, Inc." concerning the Petition for Rulemaking, RM-9620. If you require a disk or e mail copy, please contact the undersigned. My e mail address is dbaughn@sa.ua.edu.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



David M. Baughn
Vice President
TTI, Inc.

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original

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the matter of

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MAY 22 1993

Petition of the
Community Broadcasters Association
for Establishment of a "Class A"
Television Service

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RM-9260

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To: The Commission- Mail Stop 1170

Comments of TTI, Inc.

These comments are filed by TTI, Inc. (TTI), Licensee of low power television station WJRD LP, Tuscaloosa/Northport, Alabama.

1. The Community Broadcasters Association (CBA) has petitioned the Commission in the above captioned proceeding to adopt rules to establish a "Class A" television service. The Class A license would be available to existing LPTV stations that meet certain criteria. A Class A station would have "primary status." The displacement and/or complete loss of LPTV stations which are providing local programming to their respective areas could be avoided in some cases. TTI supports this petition in general and offers specific comments and information for the Commission to consider in this rulemaking process.
2. WJRD LP is located in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama DMA. TTI has teamed up with Tuscaloosa's Local Channel, LLC. through a Local Marketing Agreement (LMA) to program and operate WJRD LP, known locally as "NewsChannel 49". With recent changes in FCC rules and policy and changes in local market conditions, WJRD LP is now the only television station in the DMA providing significant local news and public affairs programming.

3. Historically there were two stations, WCFT and WDBB, providing local news for the DMA. However, in September, 1996, WCFT in Tuscaloosa, along with LMA partner WJSU in Anniston, became the ABC affiliate for the Birmingham DMA operating as "ABC 33/40". Also through an LMA, WDBB is now operated as a full satellite of WTOO in Birmingham. To fill the void left when these two "full service" stations abandoned the market, WJRD LP has picked up the responsibility for providing the people of Tuscaloosa county with their source of local news, information, and public affairs.
4. WJRD LP broadcasts a total of 42 half hours of original news and public affairs programming per week, including live newscasts at 5:00 PM, 5:30 PM, 6:00 PM, 9:00 PM, 10:00 PM, Monday through Friday and at 10:00 PM on weekends and a public affairs program at 6:30 PM weekdays. Additionally, WJRD LP broadcasts four hours of local religious programming per week. Locally produced sports and documentary programs are broadcast weekly. WJRD LP maintains a full time broadcast meteorologist with live color Doppler radar and interrupts normal programming in the event of a weather emergency. In the past few weeks, WJRD LP has broadcast approximately 8 hours of live emergency weather information, including numerous tornado and severe thunderstorm warnings. The station utilizes a news department staff of 26 full time employees and other part time personnel including students from the University of Alabama, a commitment that is unmatched by many full service television stations. WJRD LP has achieved competitive Nielson ratings for its news programming. WJRD LP also broadcasts other programming unique to the market such as "America's Black Forum."

5. Even though WJRD LP is a vital resource to its community, it faces displacement and possible total elimination due to the implementation of DTV. WJRD LP's channel 49 has been assigned to a station 90 miles away, forcing WJRD LP to seek an alternative frequency on which to operate. Even if another channel can be found, WJRD LP faces the possibility that it may be forced into a spectrum auction in order to remain on the air.
6. Class A status would prevent the future loss of WJRD LP and other similar LPTV stations. TTI believes that the creation of the Class A television service is vital to the future of WJRD LP.
7. TTI believes that the CBA petition does not adequately address some interference issues. The CBA petition would require that a Class A station not cause interference to the grade B contour of a full service station or the protected contour of an LPTV. TTI believes that this area of the proposal needs further definition.
8. Under current rules, a new LPTV cannot cause interference to an existing LPTV. However the new LPTV can accept as much interference as it wants from the existing LPTV. Under the CBA proposal, the existing LPTV would not be eligible to upgrade to Class A because it would be interfering with the new LPTV. A better alternative for the criterion concerning LPTV to LPTV interference would be to merely require a statement that the Class A applicant is operating in accordance with its construction permit or license and would not cause any additional interference to any existing full service grade B contour or LPTV protected contour.
9. A similar situation could exist where a full service station has increased power or changed transmitter location resulting in an interference contour overlap by an LPTV

station. In this event, the LPTV should be allowed to upgrade to Class A and to continue to operate until actual interference occurs and the interference cannot be eliminated by remedial measures. In the meantime, such a station should be given the opportunity to eliminate the conflict through filing of a displacement application. The displacement application should be considered a minor change as they have been in the past. After the establishment of Class A service, full service stations should not be allowed to increase power or move location where additional interference would be caused to or received from an existing Class A station.


10. TTI further believes that methods to show absence of interference should be allowed such as Longley-Rice, terrain shielding, directional receiving antenna factor, lack of population, and interference already existing from other sources. These showings should be acceptable for NTSC to NTSC, NTSC to DTV, and DTV to DTV situations. These methods would be particularly useful in an NTSC to NTSC co-channel situation with no offset where a D/U ratio of 45 dB is required by current LPTV rules. This often results in a station being protected in an area far outside its market area and where it is already not receivable due to existing interference.
11. Another minor problem with the CBA proposal is the requirement to broadcast programming "within the principal city contour of the station." Due to the nature of LPTV stations, many LPTV stations fail to cover their entire communities with such a strong signal and there is no current requirement to do so. TTI suggests an alternate definition of local programming such as the station's market area, DMA, or SMA. Another simple alternative is to define local programming as that produced within 35 miles of the station's transmitter location. If the Commission believes strongly in

defining local programming by coverage contour, TTI suggests specifying 54 dBu for UHF stations and 45 dBu for VHF stations.

12. As suggested in the CBA petition, the programming should be considered local if it is within the local area of any of a group of commonly programmed stations. TTI has plans to cover the entire local market by linking a series of LPTV stations. TTI has already entered into an agreement to purchase an LPTV CP in Demopolis, Alabama and we hope to convert it to Class A along with WJRD LP.
13. TTI agrees with the CBA proposal to allow Class A stations to use regular four letter call signs. It has been our experience that the use of other types of call signs is confusing to the public.
14. TTI supports the CBA proposal, including those sections not specifically referred to in these comments, and urges the Commission to adopt it in the soonest possible time frame.

Respectfully Submitted,

TTI, Inc.
3330 Main Avenue
Northport, Alabama 35476
205-333-1007

Signed: 
David M. Baughn, Vice President


Date: 5-20-98

Certificate of Service

I, David M. Baughn, do hereby certify that I have, this 20th day of May, 1998, sent via FedEx a copy of the foregoing "Comments of TTI, Inc." in RM-9260 to the following:

Irwin, Campbell & Tannenwald, P.C.
Counsel for the Community Broadcasters Association
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036-3101

Secretary
Room 222
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554



David M. Baughn